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Chairperson: Mr. Valladares (Vice-Chairperson) (Honduras)

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In the absence of Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar), Mr. Valladares (Honduras), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 31: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East *(continued)* (A/64/13 and Add.1, A/64/115, 174, 323 and 324; A/C.4/64/7)

1. **Mr. Al-Zayani** (Bahrain) expressed his delegation's appreciation of the work of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and thanked the countries that had given refuge to Palestine refugees, namely Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon.

2. Although the ongoing reform of UNRWA had achieved some success in improving its effectiveness in delivering services to refugees, the financial situation of the Agency, which the Commissioner-General in 2008 and in previous years had described as precarious, would remain an obstacle to further achievements until such time as the General Fund was fully funded, so ensuring the Agency's capacity to fulfil its mission. In that connection he expressed appreciation of the generosity of the major donors.

3. It was clear from the report of the Commissioner-General (A/64/13) that the Agency had made great efforts to improve the quality of its services to Palestine refugees through enhanced programme management and streamlined support services under the organizational development process and that it had also responded to emergencies in its five fields of operation. The Commissioner-General and the senior staff of the Agency were to be commended for their efforts to address the humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory involving malnutrition among children, increasing poverty and unemployment, deteriorating health conditions, the displacement of Palestinians following the destruction of their homes, the disruption of education programmes and the increasing demands since September 2000 of keeping up to the worsening economic and social conditions.

4. The Agency's vision for every Palestinian of enjoyment of high standards of human development and of active and productive participation in social, economic and cultural life was being frustrated by the ongoing aggression of the Israeli forces of occupation against the Palestinian people, Israeli restrictions on movement, the extension of the separation wall in the West Bank and around Jerusalem, the enlargement of existing settlements and the construction of new ones and other restrictions that had fragmented the West Bank into cantons isolated one from another, the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip and the destruction of Agency installations where Palestinians had sought refuge. All those measures were flagrant violations of the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations and of the Fourth Geneva Convention for the protection of civilian persons in time of war.

5. The report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (A/64/35) gave numerous examples of deaths, injuries and damage to property as a result of Israeli military action, and further examples of Israeli aggression appeared in document A/64/13 and in the report of the United Nations Headquarters Board of Inquiry established to investigate certain incidents in the Gaza Strip between 27 December 2008 and 19 January 2009 (A/63/855-S/2009/250).

6. The sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of UNRWA provided an opportunity to reflect on the need to solve issues relating to the Palestine refugees in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, particularly paragraph 11 which specified their right to return to their homes. The Palestinian question was, indeed, the key issue in the overall problem of the Middle East.

7. **Ms. Sobhan** (Bangladesh) said that her Government had watched with utter frustration as Israeli operations violated the basic rights of Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and as the illegal expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Lebanon unlawfully encroached on Palestinian lands. The spiralling violence and the persecution, deprivation of rights and deteriorating humanitarian conditions of the refugees were of the utmost concern.

8. Gaza's industry was almost at a standstill and over 40 per cent of the labour force was out of work. Israel must remove all the restrictions that were preventing the Palestinians from earning their livelihood normally. The impediments also to free movement by UNRWA personnel and vehicles there

and elsewhere in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were severely hampering the Agency's humanitarian work and had caused the socio-economic and living conditions of the Palestinians to deteriorate further.

9. The focus of UNRWA activities was on the creation of new jobs. Bangladesh, as the birthplace of microcredit, was gratified by the success of the Agency's microenterprise programme and its wide acceptance in the region as a major tool for poverty alleviation and economic development. The programme should now concentrate on empowering poor Palestinian women. Bangladesh would be happy to share its expertise in the field in order to help fine-tune the programme to the special needs of the Palestinian people and the region as a whole.

10. Refugees were among the most vulnerable groups and depended on international assistance. The international community should come forward with generous contributions to fund the expanded requirements of UNRWA, particularly for rehabilitation and emergency programmes to assist Palestine refugees.

Agenda item 32: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (A/64/332, 339, 340 and 354)

11. **The Chairperson**, drawing attention to the documents under agenda item 32, informed the Committee that two reports of the Secretary-General, those prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 63/97 and 98, had yet to be issued.

12. **Mr. Kohona** (Sri Lanka), introducing the report of the Special Committee (A/64/339), said that once again, because access had been denied by the Israeli authorities to the occupied territories themselves, a mission of the Special Committee had prepared the report on the basis of first-hand accounts given by witnesses in Cairo, Amman and Damascus. The mission had also reviewed a considerable amount of documentary evidence, including maps and other written and electronic information material.

13. The deteriorating situation in Gaza and the other Palestinian and Arab territories under occupation was seriously affecting prospects for peace and for a two-State solution. The most pressing concern was the drastic impact the Israeli offensive of late December 2008 and early January 2009 had had on the civilian population of the Gaza Strip. The excessive force used, in violation of international law, had killed thousands and destroyed vital civilian infrastructure. Because Israel had closed the borders, over one million civilians had been trapped. The situation in Gaza remained volatile, with illegal trade through underground tunnels as the only means of obtaining essential goods. Lack of construction materials and fuel and long power cuts had increased unemployment and poverty. Coupled with the lingering consequences of years of isolation and the economic blockade, the war had caused the formal economy in Gaza to almost totally collapse.

14. The Special Committee had been alerted particularly to the state of the health sector, where the destruction of medical facilities and the subsequent unavailability of medicines, medical equipment and hence treatment had made the situation critical. Furthermore, restrictions at border crossings prevented even seriously ill patients from seeking medical care elsewhere.

15. The continued settlement activities and the construction of the separation wall by Israel were a severe constraint on the freedom of movement of Palestinian citizens in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Road barriers and other types of control were interfering with education, and there were reports of increasing incidents of harassment and humiliation of Palestinians, especially women and girls, at road checkpoints and during security searches of homes. Two hundred kilometres of the illegal separation wall, whose placement had not been dictated by security considerations according to many witnesses, Israelis and Palestinians alike, had already been completed, and it served to perpetuate Israeli settlements, cut into the area of the Palestinian State and ensure lasting Israeli control over parts of the West Bank.

16. Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention facilities were subject to demeaning treatment, unlawful interrogation tactics and even torture, and administrative detention orders had enabled the Israeli authorities to hold prisoners without due process. Yet Israel, as the occupying Power, was required to comply with its obligations under applicable international law and international humanitarian law.

17. The continued illegal imposition of Israeli law, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan warranted the international community's immediate attention. There had been reports of

violations of land rights, illegal settlements, discriminatory treatment in employment and lack of job opportunities, restrictions on trade — all of which hindered any meaningful economic development. Minefields still posed a threat to civilians, with numerous casualties reported. Syrian Arab prisoners were not being treated according to the standard minimum rules. And the long-term effects of fragmented communities had damaged the social fabric of the Syrian Arabs.

18. He reviewed the specific recommendations which the Special Committee addressed to the General Assembly and through it to the Security Council and Member States, the Government of Israel, and the Palestinian Authority. All the parties concerned should act on those recommendations and look upon them as their collective responsibility to alleviate the long years of suffering of the Palestinians and other Arabs living under occupation, so that sustainable peace would not be an illusion.

19. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for Palestine) said that the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, had deteriorated on all fronts in the past year. During its brutal military aggression in the Gaza Strip against a Palestinian civilian population already debilitated by the deprivation imposed on it by a two-year Israeli blockade, Israel had — in the judgement of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (the Goldstone report) and other independent investigations — been guilty of grave breaches of international humanitarian law, which amounted to war crimes.

20. Elsewhere, Israel had pursued its unlawful colonization, especially in and around East Jerusalem, aimed at the de facto annexation of even more Palestinian land, thus altering the nature and status of the Occupied Territory. That unlawful two-pronged Israeli policy — in conjunction with colonization — had caused socio-economic devastation, fragmented the Palestinian Territory, and fuelled cycles of violence over the years, thus impeding efforts to resume the peace process on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, the Arab peace initiative and the Quartet road map.

21. The tragic consequences of the military attack on the Gaza Strip were well known. Israel had deliberately taken no precautions to protect civilians, in grave breach of its obligations as an occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention, and excessive, indiscriminate force not justified by military necessity had been used systematically, on a scale unprecedented since the occupation had begun in 1967. The pattern of destruction, the Goldstone report concluded, had amounted to an attack on the foundations of civilian life and constituted a war crime. Moreover, Israel had deliberately obstructed any reconstruction activity by its continuing refusal to lift its blockade on Gaza. Humanitarian access, the import of essential goods and the movements of civilians continued to be impeded, and exports were totally prohibited. The blockade, which had exacerbated already high levels of poverty, so that at least 300,000 persons were now living in abject poverty in Gaza, must be lifted immediately. In the view of the Goldstone mission, the series of acts that had deprived Palestinians in the Gaza Strip of their means of subsistence, employment, housing and water and denied or restricted their rights could be considered persecution, and thus crimes against humanity.

22. Regrettably, the situation in the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, remained volatile. In the West Bank, the nearly 11,000 Palestinians currently in Israeli prisons — part of the at least 700,000 that had been detained by Israel since 1967 — were being held under degrading, inhumane conditions and even tortured. The occupying Power must release all Palestinian prisoners.

23. Also of particular concern were the settlements Israel was establishing throughout the Territory, in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and Additional Protocol I, as well as of many other legal obligations. The unlawful colonization campaign was one of the major obstacles to peace and had had an impact on all aspects of Palestinian life, owing to the countless evictions, confiscations of Palestinian land and destruction of property, the construction of the separation wall, the building of Israeli-only bypass roads, and mounting settler violence. The situation had become most severe in and around Occupied East Jerusalem, where hundreds of families had been made homeless and a permit regime and movement restrictions isolated the city from its natural environs and from the indigenous population. Those measures were designed to ensure a Jewish majority and alter the city's demographic and physical landscape, unilaterally determining its fate. Several Palestinians evicted from

East Jerusalem had accompanied her and would be happy to speak first-hand with members of the Committee later.

24. In addition, Israel had continued to impose hundreds of checkpoints — many of them linked to the settlements and the wall — to restrict the movement of persons and goods into and out of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in a form of collective punishment. That policy was having an impact on the rights to health, education, work, food, family life, choice of residence and worship. Altogether, the colonization measures had gravely undermined the integrity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

25. Colonization and the peace process could not coexist. As the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission had found, ending the military occupation was a prerequisite for the return of a dignified life for Palestinians, as well as for development and a peaceful solution to the conflict. Israel, no doubt emboldened by the fact that it had never been truly held accountable and punished for its transgressions against the Palestinian people, had committed its recent crimes before the eyes of the international community. Momentum was rising, however, to end the cycle of impunity and pursue justice for the victims. Only the converging efforts of the international community, and the Palestinian side would compel Israel to abide by all its legal obligations and commit to the pursuit of peace. That would create the necessary conditions, in which an independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, could be established.

26. **Ms. Mawe** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU), the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey, the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, and, in addition, Armenia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that they remained committed to a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of international law, the relevant Security Council resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including land for peace, the Quartet road map, the agreements previously reached by the parties, as well as the Arab peace initiative. The EU was equally committed to the two-State solution.

27. Consequently, the continued settlement activities, house demolitions and evictions in the occupied West Bank remained a serious concern, particularly the development in East Jerusalem, for if there was to be genuine peace, a way must be found to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two States. The EU thus urged the Government of Israel to end settlement activities immediately, including in East Jerusalem and including so-called natural growth, and to dismantle all outposts erected since March 2001. The settlements were illegal under international law and the EU would not recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders other than those agreed by both parties. Recalling the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, it reiterated its call for the dismantling of the separation barrier erected on occupied land along lines which did not correspond to the 1949 Armistice Demarcation. It called, furthermore, for the progressive removal of Israeli restrictions on movement and access, in order to improve living conditions in the West Bank and revitalize the Palestinian economy.

28. Palestinian prisoners should be released in greater numbers, with priority given to minors. The practice of administrative detention by Israel continued to raise serious human rights concerns.

29. The EU deeply deplored the loss of life in Gaza during the conflict at the beginning of the year. It attached enormous importance to the Geneva Conventions, which formed the heart of international humanitarian law, and therefore called on all parties to stop incitement and violence against civilians. A durable solution to the Gaza crisis would be the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and an immediate and unconditional opening of crossings to allow the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza, in order to permit its reconstruction and economic recovery.

30. Regional peace and the creation of a contiguous and viable Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security with the State of Israel, was a fundamental interest for the European Union. A Palestinian State in which the Palestinian people could determine their own destiny was an indispensable and urgent step towards a more stable and peaceful Middle East.

31. **Ms. Hernández Toledano** (Cuba) expressed alarm at the escalation of violence and unprecedented attacks in the occupied Arab territories, and extreme

concern at the increasing numbers of poor unable to meet their basic needs. The international community's efforts had come to naught, while the Israeli authorities, with flagrant disdain for international law and blatant disrespect for the resolutions of the international community, pursued their policy of aggression. The usual double standards and the threat by one permanent member to veto any draft resolution aimed at a just and impartial solution had shackled Security Council attempts seriously to address the issue.

32. As illustrated in the reports of the Secretary-General, the Israeli Government's lack of commitment and cooperation was manifest in its refusal to provide the information required by the General Assembly to fulfil its mandate. Cuba was alarmed at the constant deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, owing mainly to the occupying Power's indiscriminate and excessive use of force against Palestinian civilians, as well as other illegal policies and practices and the collective punishment of Palestinians, all of which violated the rights of the Palestinian people, exacerbating their socio-economic situation and producing a dire humanitarian crisis.

33. Cuba condemned Israel's decades-long military occupation of Palestinian lands and was appalled at the impunity with which it continued its military actions such as Operation Cast Lead. It was waging an unequal war with the most modern weaponry against a civilian population defending its inalienable right to exist as an independent State, which constituted a massive violation of Palestinians' human rights, including the right to life. Israel's action was in blatant disregard of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and of General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 (2004).

34. Cuba reaffirmed its belief in the invalidity and illegality of all the occupying Power's actions to alter the character of the occupied Syrian Golan and impose its jurisdiction and administration. Such actions flouted international law, international agreements and the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations. Cuba demanded that Israel should withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan to pre-June 1967 borders. The Palestinian people had the inalienable right to establish an independent, sovereign State with East Jerusalem as its capital. She therefore called for Israel's unconditional return of the occupied Arab territories, which was the only road towards a just and lasting peace.

35. **Mr. Hadhrami** (Yemen) said that for over four decades Israel had been violating the human rights of the population of the occupied Arab territories. In Gaza, 1.5 million Palestinians were living among the devastation wrought by the most recent Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip in which 1,400 people had been killed and over 5,500 wounded, more than 5,000 homes had been destroyed and some 20,000 Palestinian families displaced. The implausible justification offered by Israel for the attack in which so many civilians had been killed and so many schools and other public buildings and infrastructure installations deliberately bombed was self-defence. Light was shed on the matter by the report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (A/HRC/12/48).

36. The report concluded, in particular, that the Palestinians were entitled to resist the forcible denial of their right to self-determination and their right to life and that Israel had deliberately targeted civilians and their property. The Israeli military operations in Gaza could only be understood as an aspect of Israel's ongoing policies in Gaza and the other occupied territories, many of which were based on, or led to, violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law. Despite Israel's claim that its military action had been undertaken in self-defence, the Mission found that the action was directed, at least in part, at another target, namely the inhabitants of Gaza, and that the repeated failure to distinguish between combatants and civilians was not the result of accidental errors but of deliberate instructions that had been given to the military. Finally, the evidence gathered by the Mission showed that the Israeli military forces had adopted a deliberate and systematic policy to destroy infrastructure not because the targets constituted a military threat but in order to make the daily life of the civilian population difficult.

37. The Palestinians in the West Bank continued to suffer from destruction of their homes, confiscation of their land, the expansion of settlements and the continuing construction of the separation wall, which was a deliberate challenge to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. The campaign for the Judaization of Jerusalem, aimed at altering the historical, ethnic, cultural and religious features of the City and marginalizing the Palestinian, Arab, Islamic and Christian presence, was continuing.

38. The suffering of the Palestinian people would not cease until the international community assumed its responsibilities and until the Israeli occupation of all the Palestinian and Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan, came to an end. His delegation supported the claim of the Palestinian people to establish their own independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

39. **Mr. Alqahtani** (United Arab Emirates) said that Israel had sought to conceal its repeated crimes in Palestine and in the other occupied Arab territories, in particular by preventing the members of the Special Committee from entering the territories to carry out its mandate in compliance with the relevant resolution of the General Assembly. Every year since the Committee's establishment in 1968, in the course of verifying the facts of Israel's occupation and its violations of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Special Committee had interviewed scores of eyewitnesses and victims from neighbouring States.

40. The report of the Special Committee (A/64/339) provided convincing proof of the daily violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the population of Palestine and the occupied Golan. Israel's war machine, armed with internationally prohibited weapons of the most dangerous kind, continued to consolidate Israel's occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories. Not content with perpetrating military attacks against and making incursions into the towns and villages of Palestine and the occupied Golan, arbitrarily killing and arresting civilians, including children, women and the infirm, destroying houses, targeting public buildings and infrastructure, uprooting trees, bulldozing land, destroying farms and public and private property, pillaging natural resources and the cultural heritage, violating freedom of worship and sacred places, Israel had recently gone still further. It had subjected the Palestinian people to collective punishment, destroying basic infrastructure on a wide scale, including electricity generating stations and sources of clean drinking water in the Gaza Strip, and had tightened its blockade, closing the entrances to towns and villages in the Gaza Strip and elsewhere, preventing the population from obtaining daily necessities such as food, medicine and fuel, as well as materials for reconstruction following the destruction wrought by Israel. The Palestinian economy had suffered greatly, with 80 per cent of families in Gaza and 45 per cent of those in the West Bank living below the poverty line, the unemployment rate had reached nearly 50 per cent and the Palestinian community was beset by health problems, disease, malnourishment and psychological trauma, especially among mothers and children. In addition, Israel had attacked United Nations mission headquarters in the Palestinian territories, hindering the Organization's humanitarian efforts in a manner blatantly contrary to the will of the international community.

41. His Government strongly condemned those flagrant violations of the principles of the United Nations Charter and the provisions of international humanitarian law, regarding them as war crimes and crimes against humanity as confirmed by the report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission, known as the Goldstone report (A/HRC/12/48), which, in particular, had requested the competent bodies of the international community to exert pressure on Israel to cease its aggression and its illegal adventure in the Palestinian territories and occupied East Jerusalem, to desist from its policy of collective punishment and its blockade of the Gaza Strip, to open its borders immediately to all forms of humanitarian aid, in particular food, medicines and medical treatment, and to withdraw immediately from all Palestinian and Arab territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, the occupied Syrian Golan and the occupied parts of South Lebanon. The Fact Finding Mission had also called on Israel to comply immediately with all the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly and with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which had requested Israel to cease its construction of the separation wall in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem.

42. His delegation requested the international community, as a matter of urgency, to take all the measures indicated in the conclusions and recommendations of the report contained in document A/64/339, including the imposition of sanctions on Israel if it failed to comply fully with all United Nations resolutions; to request Israel to allow the members of the Special Committee to enter the occupied territories in order to fulfil its mandate; and to require the Israeli Government to pay appropriate compensation for the damage it had inflicted on the

Palestinians and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan.

43. His Government further called on the international community, and above all the United Nations, to protect the Palestinians and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan from Israel's practices in conducting its brutal occupation. It trusted that the General Assembly would strengthen the mandate of the Special Committee to ensure comprehensive coverage of breaches of human rights in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories so as to alert world public opinion to the dangers and to achieve a just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question and of the situation in the Middle East.

44. **Mr. Berrah** (Algeria) said that his delegation wished to call special attention to what had become an unfortunate tradition in the Secretariat, namely, the late publication, year after year and with no reasonable explanation, of the report on the agenda item currently under consideration, inevitably forcing postponement of the discussion.

45. The situation in the Middle East grew worse by the day owing to Israel's policy of aggression against and intimidation of the Palestinian people and the States of the region. The Middle East had been transformed from a land of tolerance and peaceful cohabitation of various religions and civilizations into a theatre of conflict that knew no geographical barriers owing to a regime whose systematic recourse to terror, violence and elaborate plans for annexation had institutionalized the aggression which informed all its relations with States in the region.

46. The repression of the Palestinian population was worsening and systematic annexation of land, Judaization, and elimination of Palestinians were the order of the day. Having failed to break the Palestinian people's national will to resist, Israel was waging a veritable campaign of genocide, exemplified by the recent attack on Gaza. Described in detail by the Observer for Palestine and in the report of the Special Committee (A/64/339), the undeniable acts of aggression had notorious consequences for any peace process. Yet Israel continued to act with arrogance and defiance.

47. Al-Haram al-Sharif, an Islamic holy place, whose fate was inextricably linked to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, had again been the target of blasphemous attacks by Israel and the basis for continuous expropriation and expulsion of the ancestral inhabitants of Al-Quds, in an inexcusable attempt to Judaize it despite its history and against all the rules of law, adding one more step in the escalation of provocations vigorously condemned by the Organization of the Islamic Conference — and challenging yet again the authority of the Security Council and the entire international community.

48. The people and Government of Algeria were deeply distressed by those serious violations. They rejected any measure that undermined Palestine's sovereignty over Al-Quds al-Sharif, and condemned Israeli violations and all acts designed to alter the demography and geography of the Holy City. Bolstered by its impunity, Israel systematically used force to impose its will on the Arab peoples of the region and, secure in its support and the knowledge that any United Nations policy decision would be blocked, it continued to annex Arab lands in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the principle of the inadmissibility of acquisition of territories by force. Such was the situation prevailing in south Lebanon and the Syrian Golan where, with contempt for the mandatory Security Council resolutions, the Israeli occupation was becoming more intolerable and, for all that they were sovereign States, the identity and Arabness of a section of their population continued to be attacked.

49. The only path to protection of the sacred nature of the holy places of Al-Quds and the advent of peace to the region was the total evacuation of all occupied Arab territories and the restoration to the Palestinian people of their legitimate and inalienable rights, including the right to build their free and sovereign State on their native soil, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital. Algeria stood firmly united with the Palestinians and would continue to support them fully in their heroic struggle until their legitimate national rights were restored once and for all.

50. **Mr. Mbaye** (Senegal), expressing his delegation's full support for the recommendations contained in the report of the Special Committee, said that the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had been exacerbated by Operation Cast Lead. The occupying Power's intensification of its border controls and food import restrictions had reduced exports to below the bare minimum. Rebuilding was yet to begin in Gaza, potentially transforming a difficult situation into an unprecedented humanitarian disaster if it was not

solved immediately. The continued expansion of settlements in the West Bank, the construction of hundreds of homes, Israel's continued approval of similar projects, and its imposition of its laws and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan had adverse consequences for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of its people, young and old, individuals and families alike.

51. Notwithstanding the Israeli occupier's lack of cooperation, the Special Committee had collected evidence enough of its denial of sundry rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs under occupation, itself a human rights violation. He urged the United Nations to take the steps required to force Israel to abide scrupulously by the principles of international law, and he invited the State of Israel to look into its own history of suffering and find the will to end the suffering inflicted daily on the population of the occupied territories, to resume the negotiations and to allow the Special Committee to visit the occupied territories in order better to fulfil its mandate.

52. In conclusion, he urged the international community, and particularly the Security Council and the Member States, to ensure that the Special Committee's recommendations were effectively implemented with a view to promoting and protecting the rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories.

53. **Mr. Sangqu** (South Africa), reiterating his delegation's full support for the work of the Committee, said that the report again corroborated the intensification of the illegal Israeli practices associated with the military, socio-economic and humanitarian disorder in the occupied Arab territories.

54. South Africa condemned the acts of aggression and gross and systematic human rights violations in the Gaza Strip. While the military incursion had ended, its consequences for the people of Gaza must not be forgotten. Although Israel bore full responsibility for compensating the Palestinian people for its actions, the international community must also take the lead in efforts to rebuild Gaza. He therefore enjoined the Committee to stress the importance of the recent Sharm el-Sheikh Conference in Support of the Palestinian Economy for the Reconstruction of Gaza and again urged Israel to lift its siege of the Gaza Strip so that humanitarian aid and supplies could reach the area.

55. He reiterated his delegation's strong belief that the full implementation of the Special Committee's report — which was consistent with the report of the United Nations Board of Inquiry [1970] and the Goldstone report — would contribute greatly towards accountability. Reiterating South Africa's condemnation of the continuing blockade, the ongoing construction of the separation wall and the expansion of Israeli settlements, he also urged Israel to cease expansion of settlements in the West Bank and the demolition of Palestinian homes there and in East Jerusalem, which were severely damaging the social and economic structures of the West Bank and Gaza, increasing unemployment, poverty and reliance on humanitarian assistance and directly affecting the enjoyment of economic and social rights.

56. Peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians was achievable if it were based on the two-State solution, with the pre-1967 borders in place and with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine. His delegation supported the draft resolutions under the agenda item and looked forward to the day when Israel fulfilled its international obligations and cooperated fully with the Special Committee.

57. **Mr. Andrabi** (Pakistan), noting that the Special Committee's report had become a compendium of the Israeli occupation force's human rights abuses of the Palestinians and other Arabs of the occupied territories, including the Syrian Golan, and that the further deterioration of the situation had been corroborated not only by United Nations reports, but also by the international independent media, Israel could continue to maintain illegal occupation with double discourse owing to their direct effect on lives and livelihoods on the ground and to their negative impact on the broader peace process, the only light at the end of a long tunnel of conflict and violence.

58. His delegation deplored the worsening humanitarian situation in the occupied territories, mainly caused by activities that are contrary to the road map and Israel's repeated commitments. The authorities must cease such practices, which were responsible for an entire array of human rights violations and hardships for the people of the occupied territories, including deprivation of their natural wealth and resources, but also their very right to self-determination, denial of which lay at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

59. An atmosphere of trust and confidence, with the active engagement of the international community, was the only way forward for the peace process and for progress towards a two-State solution, while parallel progress in Syria-Israel and Lebanon-Israel was required for wider peace in the Middle East. Pakistan, with its natural affiliation with the Palestinian issue and its deep commitment to its just and peaceful settlement, considered effective implementation of the Special Committee's recommendations to be essential for reviving the peace process, the only avenue that could lead to lasting peace.

60. **Mr. Al-Ansari** (Qatar), extending his delegation's sympathy to those who had been brutally evicted from their homes in Gaza, commended the detailed and impassioned statement by the Observer for Palestine and expressed the hope that Palestine would soon be a Member State.

61. Citing at length Israeli atrocities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as reported in document A/64/339 and in the statement made by the Observer for Palestine, he said that those illegal actions undermined the foundations of sustainable development for the Palestinian people. Moreover, the military occupation not only provided Israel with security, but was in fact an appalling violation of the human rights of unarmed and oppressed people, on the groundless pretext of combating violence and terrorism. The right to fight for liberation from foreign occupation, the main reason for the crisis, was a legitimate right and could not be equated with military aggression.

62. Since Israel's illegal practices constituted a clear breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and ran counter to relevant Security Council resolutions, it was incumbent upon Israel to cease them forthwith and desist immediately and completely from all illegal settlement activities. It was not enough for the international community to identify the issues, such as the construction of the separation wall and the dumping of toxic waste. It must also stop the aggression, that was the particular responsibility of the five permanent members of the Security Council, especially those States with a historical responsibility for the Middle East. Statements in support of the Palestinian people must be transformed into action on the ground. As a member of the international community, the State of Qatar, albeit a small country, had given the Palestinian people a great deal of political and financial support and would do all in its power to end their subjugation and ensure that the Arabs in the occupied Golan were not forgotten.

63. He called for the denunciation of Israel's most dangerous practices, which included violation of Islamic and Christian holy places in order to stir up the feelings of 1.5 billion Muslims and did not augur well for the establishment of a lasting and comprehensive peace. There was something wrong with Israeli legislation, which did not criminalize such acts despite the hatred they incited and the potential for terrorism and violence they created. Israel must comply immediately and unconditionally with the relevant resolutions, especially Security Council resolution 497 (1981) to the effect that the imposition of Israeli laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Golan Heights was null and void and without international legal effect.

64. He emphasized the need to continue to assign importance to the work of the Special Committee and the deliberations of the Fourth Committee on the Palestinian issue, which was still one of the most crucial on the Organization's agenda. Israel's persistence in its illegal practices against the Palestinian and Arab peoples under occupation did not constitute civilized behaviour. Israel had distanced itself from the family of nations, squandering the opportunity to establish relations with the peace-loving nations of the Middle East. It should realize that an end to the occupation would provide a secure economic and social future for the peoples of the entire region, including the Israeli people. Its compliance with the relevant resolution would demonstrate good faith towards a just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East crisis.

65. **Mr. Ja'fari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, for the fourth year in succession, the report of the Special Committee (A/64/339) drew attention to Israel's deliberate destruction of the demographic character and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan. Despite the international community's condemnation of such abusive practices, Israel remained heedless of humanitarian and moral standards and had persisted for decades in disregarding resolutions such as General Assembly resolution 2443 (XXIII), had consistently refused to allow the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly to visit the occupied Arab territories and had shown no desire to cooperate with the international community to establish a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

66. Israel had continued to occupy the Syrian Golan in defiance of repeated international calls to withdraw from occupied Arab territories and to rescind the law adopted by the Knesset imposing Israeli legislation on the occupied Syrian Golan, a measure which had been declared by the Security Council in its resolution 497 (1981) to be null and void and without legal effect.

67. Despite hundreds of United Nations resolutions condemning Israel, it had persisted in its systematic policy of obliterating Syrian geographical features in the occupied Golan by confiscating land, destroying Syrian villages and towns and replacing them with illegal settlements in a manner contrary to resolution 10/17 of the Human Rights Council, which urged the necessity of desisting from such practices because they were a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

68. The report also confirmed once again Israel's continuing practice of confiscating the private property of Syrian citizens in the occupied Golan, plundering its natural resources, including water resources, and creating settlements throughout the Golan and Palestine, using water as a means of exerting pressure on the Syrian population of the Golan, bulldozing and destroying their land, uprooting their fruit trees, blockading them economically and imposing exorbitant taxes on them, particularly on agricultural workers.

69. The occupying Power still refused to specify the location of the mines it had laid in the occupied Syrian Arab Golan which had so far caused over 600 victims, 214 of them children, and remained the major threat to the lives of Syrian farmers and other inhabitants of the Golan. Israel had also been burying its nuclear waste in certain areas of the occupied Golan with complete disregard for the health of the inhabitants and for the principles of international law. The Syrian Arab Republic had several times drawn the attention of the international community to that matter and had called for pressure to be exerted on Israel to remove the nuclear waste and to comply with its obligations, in particular under the relevant resolutions of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

70. Israel had subjected the population of the Golan to harsh, tyrannical and inhuman conditions of internment and had held show trials of Syrian detainees, arbitrarily arresting two Syrian journalists on a charge of communicating with their homeland, and imposing house arrest on a two-year-old child on the pretext that he was born outside the Syrian Golan while his parents were studying at the University of Damascus, as described in paragraph 92 of the Special Committee's report.

71. Israel persisted in its policy of cutting off all forms of communication and contact between Syrian families that had been separated as a result of the occupation by refusing to allow visits to Syrian nationals in the occupied Syrian Golan. His Government had appealed to the United Nations, the European Union and international governmental and non-governmental organizations for assistance in resolving the situation but, as usual, Israel had paid no attention.

72. Israel's policy of aggression against the Palestinian people had continued with extrajudicial killings, starvation, collective punishments, confiscation of land, violations of human rights, forced displacement, closure of border crossings and the transformation of Gaza into the largest prison in the world, depriving its inhabitants of the basic necessities of life, including food, electricity, medicines, water and fuel. The Special Committee's report showed that the situation of human rights in Palestine was largely attributable to the most recent Israeli attack on Gaza, in which 1,420 Palestinians had been killed including 1,170 non-combatants, as stated in paragraph 20. Further confirmation of the attack was provided by the report of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (A/HRC/12/48), which had explicitly referred to the deliberate targeting by Israel of civilians during the attack, describing those acts as war crimes which required action on the part of the international community. Accordingly the credibility of the United Nations was being put to the test and the Organization should assume its responsibilities and bring the Israeli war criminals before international justice.

73. The Special Committee's report also referred to the flagrant violations by Israel of international law in the West Bank, where Israel continued with its settlement policy despite international appeals. The occupying Power was still building the racist separation wall which violated all the rights of the Palestinian people in the West Bank, particularly in East Jerusalem where the reluctance of the international community to take action had emboldened the forces of occupation to disregard the feelings of Muslims around the world by digging further tunnels under Jerusalem.

74. His delegation supported the Special Committee's recommendations that the Security Council should urge implementation of its resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 497 (1981), which rejected the annexation by Israel of the occupied Syrian Golan. It also supported the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning the racist separation wall and the request of the Committee to the international community and the contracting parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to take concrete measures to compel Israel to fulfil its legal obligations in accordance with international law, to return the occupied territory in Palestine, the Golan and Lebanon and to bring about a just and comprehensive peace in the region based on the relevant international resolutions.

75. **Mr. Chabi** (Morocco) said that the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had greatly deteriorated as a result of the continuing breaches of international law by the Israeli forces of occupation, including grave violations against civilians, an increase in deliberate killing, the destruction of property, the expansion of settlements, the confiscation of land, the annexation of parts of the West Bank and the continuing settlement activity in Jerusalem. The situation had been further exacerbated by Israel's military aggression against the Gaza Strip.

76. The continued building of the separation wall was an overt challenge to international opinion, which had been critical of Israel's long-standing policy of racial discrimination in the occupied Palestinian territories. The wall had cut off the sources of livelihood of Palestinians, turning their towns and villages into isolated cantons and forcing thousands of them to leave their homes. In addition to its segregation policy, Israel had imposed a financial and economic blockade on the Palestinian National Authority spreading poverty and unemployment among wide strata of the population. Many Palestinian's were being tortured in Israeli detention centres and prisons.

77. Serious violations of human rights were still being committed in the occupied Syrian Golan, which in recent years had seen many serious injustices against the Arab population. Some United Nations staff members providing humanitarian assistance to the population had also suffered and journalists had been arrested. In addition, exorbitant taxes were being imposed on farmers whose land had been confiscated to be used for the construction of Israeli settlements. The area under cultivation had been reduced to make way for military installations, the water and other natural resources of the region had been exploited, and the Arab population had suffered greatly from the administrative measures to Judaize the Golan.

78. Israel was continuing to violate human rights law as contained in international instruments, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention. The rulings of the International Court of Justice and the reports of the United Nations dealing with the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory made clear the gravity of the violations and their adverse effects on the humanitarian situation in the region. The reports of the human rights organizations operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, whether Palestinian, international or Israeli, also confirmed Israel's persistence in ignoring international resolutions urging the necessity of protecting civilians.

79. Morocco had always been in favour of working within a framework of international legitimacy to move the peace process forward, to establish a Palestinian State and to secure the return of all occupied Arab territories. It was essential to ensure respect for the international human rights system in its entirety and put an end to violence in the region, granting the Palestinian people full civil rights and thereby enabling them to live in dignity in a sovereign State in permanent peace and security.

80. His country affirmed the necessity of respecting the special status of Jerusalem and of avoiding any action that might impair its cultural and religious identity. Given the significance of Jerusalem for Muslims and its strategic importance in the peace process, King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, had urged the parties involved not to take any action likely to impair the sanctity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and other sites in Jerusalem, thereby preserving the City as a place of peace, coexistence and tolerance among the three revealed religions.

81. **Mr. Al-Otaibi** (Kuwait) observed that there had been a stalemate in the Middle East crisis, with the question of Palestine at its core, since the mid-twentieth century. The Palestinian people were still suffering, their human rights were still being violated and their lands occupied, and Security Council resolutions remained unimplemented. Despite all the fast-paced international efforts to revive the peace process, the Israeli Government, rather than

responding, continued its inhuman practices, pitting its military machine against the unarmed Palestinian people, their homes and their infrastructure, closing border crossing points, limiting freedom of movement and transportation, and engaging in blockades and collective punishment.

83. Israel was also continuing to construct the separation wall inside the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem and surrounding areas, in clear violation of the ruling of the International Court of Justice and the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Although Israel posed as a guarantor of human rights and international law, it had, as confirmed by the 2009 United Nations Board of Inquiry, committed most of the incidents in which United Nations worksites had been damaged during its attack on the Gaza Strip. Israeli settlements in the occupied Arab territories, including East Jerusalem, had also been denounced as in violation of international law by both the International Court of Justice and the Human Rights Council.

83. His Government reaffirmed its full support for the struggle of the Palestinian people to attain their lawful political rights by establishing their own State in their own land with Jerusalem as its capital. It called upon the Security Council to assume its responsibilities in the maintenance of international security by giving force to its own resolutions aimed at deterring the illegal practices of the Israeli Government, and by taking immediate measures to protect the civilian populations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and prevent further deterioration of their living conditions. His Government called for the immediate and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan. It urged the Israeli Government to implement the recommendations the Special Committee had addressed to it in its report and to begin cooperating with that Committee. The international community must pressure Israel to stop its flagrant violations of international humanitarian law within the occupied territories and to work instead for a peaceful resolution of the conflict by implementing the relevant United Nations resolutions, adopting the principle of land for peace and conforming to the Arab peace initiative and the Quartet road map, in order to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

84. **Mr. Ali** (Malaysia), drawing attention to the many passages in the Special Committee's report that illustrated Israel's flagrant breaches of the essential and inalienable human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the territories it had so long occupied, said that those breaches reinforced the international community's abhorrence of the continued systematic violation of human rights and humanitarian law.

85. The dehumanization of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories ran counter to the goal of two contiguous States living together in peace. Israel must be made to desist from its illegal actions, carried out with impunity, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Syrian Golan. He therefore called for full implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Special Committee.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

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Chairperson: Mr. Petkus (Lithuania)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 32: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories *(continued)* (A/64/332, 339, 340 and 354)

1. **Mr. Abdelaziz** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said that the basic aim of General Assembly resolution 64/10 on follow-up to the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict was to uphold justice and support the efforts to combat impunity and ensure accountability for the serious human rights violations and grave breaches of international humanitarian law committed during Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip launched on 27 December 2008. The Movement wished to reiterate its conviction that respect for international law and United Nations resolutions and decisions would advance efforts towards achieving a just, peaceful, political settlement of the conflict.

2. The report showed that the human rights situation of the Palestinian people remained dire, as a result of Israel's unlawful policies and practices, as corroborated by other recent reports. The situation had continued to deteriorate over the past year and the effect on lives and the toll of destruction and loss continued to increase at an alarming rate, particularly in the Gaza Strip as a result of the Israeli military operations of December 2008 and the continuing unlawful blockade. The Movement condemned Israel's ongoing military occupation of the Palestinian Territory and all other Arab territories, and called for the immediate cessation of Israel's illegal practices and the urgent resumption of peace process negotiations that were clearly based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference — particularly the principle of Land for Peace — the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map towards the achievement of a two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.

3. Israel's incessant violations of international law must be considered seriously by all relevant United Nations organs and appropriate actions and measures must be taken to remedy the unjust situation. The report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, the endorsement of its recommendations, and the General Assembly resolution calling, inter alia, for investigations by both sides and the reconvening of the conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention on measures to enforce and ensure respect of the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, constituted important first steps in that direction.

4. Throughout its occupation, Israel had carried out deliberate and unlawful policies and practices aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and nature of the Palestinian Territory, in particular through the confiscation of large areas of Palestinian land, its illegal settlement policy and the construction of the wall in the West Bank. In addition, hundreds of checkpoints and roadblocks continued to restrict the movement of persons and goods, which seriously undermined the integrity of the Territory, completely isolating East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. Furthermore, Israel had demolished more than 24,000 Palestinian homes and at least 1,500 new demolition orders had been made. The enforced displacement of Palestinians and their replacement with illegal settlers must be condemned by the international community. Some settlers, with the support of the Israeli Government, were waging a campaign of violence and intimidation against Palestinian civilians and perpetrating acts of incitement, in East Jerusalem in particular, where illegal excavations continued to be undertaken at holy sites.

5. The illegal settlement activities were a serious violation of international law and defied the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and the repeated calls by the international community for an immediate cessation of all such activities. Despite all efforts made in the context of the peace process, Israel had escalated settlement activities and refused to comply with the international community's calls to stop and dismantle all settlement outposts. In addition to constituting flagrant violations of international law, such actions also heightened tensions, further destabilized the fragile situation on the ground and adversely affected the peace process. Israel must abide by all its obligations under international law, including under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

6. The Movement also reaffirmed that all measures taken, or to be taken, by Israel to alter the legal, physical and demographic situation and institutional structure of the occupied Syrian Golan, and measures to impose Israeli jurisdiction and administration there,

had no legal effect. All such measures, including the illegal construction and expansion of Israeli settlements in the Syrian Golan since 1967, constituted violations of international law, international agreements, the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations, and were a challenge to the international community. The Movement called on Israel to abide by Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and withdraw completely from the occupied Syrian Golan to the borders of 4 June 1967.

7. The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to a just, peaceful and comprehensive solution in the Middle East and to the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to exercise its self-determination and sovereignty in an independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

8. **Mr. Weissbrod** (Israel) said that although the Middle East was marred by terrorists who rejected the most fundamental human rights, his Government remained committed to upholding those rights. Israel's democratic institutions, independent and highly professional judiciary and vibrant public debate ensured that it held itself to the highest international standards and its commitment to justice and to the sanctity of human rights was on a par with that of other democratic States. However, the Special Committee's report was not dedicated to the advancement of human rights; it was part of a calculated, systematic political campaign designed to vilify Israel and the right of its citizens to live in peace and security, denying them the very rights that it purported to cherish for others. Israel had refused and would continue to refuse to cooperate with the Special Committee because, like other United Nations bodies, it had predetermined its findings and conclusions.

9. For example, the report failed to mention that since 2001, more than 8,600 rockets had been launched from the Gaza Strip against Israeli towns and villages; the majority had been fired after Israel's full withdrawal from Gaza in 2005. Yet in its description of Operation Cast Lead, the report accused Israel of attacking Gaza for no reason; unbelievably, the eight years of Hamas rocket and mortar attacks on Israeli men, women and children, both farmers and city dwellers, were not mentioned. Similarly, the report ignored the current Hamas military build-up in Gaza, which endangered both Israeli and Palestinian civilians; the recent test of a Hamas missile with a range of 65 kilometres that would place most of Israel's major population centres within reach of terrorist attack; and the ships that transported weapons, rather than aid, from Iran to the people of Gaza across the Red Sea.

10. Despite that effort to "cherry-pick" information for politicized reasons in the report, the past year had been marked by many positive developments in the West Bank that had been acknowledged by the Quartet and other relevant bodies that sought to promote peace rather than the Special Committee's predictable narrative. The Palestinian economy had grown by over 7 per cent as a result of the removal of checkpoints in the West Bank and the extension of the Allenby Bridge hours of operation, which had facilitated the transfer of goods and persons. Despite the enormous security risks involved, Israel had taken many similar measures in an effort to find a balance between its legitimate security needs and its desire to foster growth and lay the foundations for peace.

11. His Government was committed to reaching a permanent peace agreement that would allow the Israeli and Palestinian peoples to live in peace, security and dignity, and Israelis longed for a time when the two peoples would be able to direct their joint energies towards productive endeavours of mutual and universal benefit. Organs which issued distorted reports like that of the Special Committee did not advance the goal of peace; on the contrary, they reinforced ingrained biases and deepened the reflexive hostility towards Israel that had fuelled the conflict for so long.

12. **Mr. Hosseini** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Israeli regime's practices were affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories. Ending the more than six decades of occupation and providing the conditions necessary for the Palestinian people to freely exercise their right to self-determination should therefore be given the highest priority. The report of the Special Committee indicated that the situation had deteriorated over the past year.

13. Following Israel's brutal assault on Gaza, world public opinion had protested against the regime and many international organizations had taken steps to address the criminal acts committed during and after the military assault. The reports of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission and of the Board of Inquiry, as well as and the relevant resolutions recently adopted by

the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly, were steps in the right direction. The United Nations must take decisive measures to address the crimes committed by the occupying regime in Gaza, including those described in the Goldstone report. The report's recommendations should be considered a valid basis for the prosecution of those involved. Excessive and disproportionate force had been used and civilian objects targeted indiscriminately, including with white phosphorus munitions. In addition, a number of violations of humanitarian law, including deliberate attacks on schools operated by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the imposition of collective punishment measures and of severe restrictions on imports to [illegible] and the continued detention of Palestinians, including children, in incommunicado conditions for prolonged periods of time, were a source of great concern. Such crimes were a clear indication that the aggressive nature and repressive policies of the regime remained unchanged.

14. While his delegation condemned the gross violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people, it believed that it was incumbent upon the international community to counter such illegal and inhuman practices and bring the perpetrators to justice. Indeed, there needed to be a greater emphasis on practical steps to enforce human rights standards and norms in the occupied territories.

15. Access to first-hand information was paramount. It was regrettable to note that, though the Special Committee had undertaken useful missions to Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic, it had not been able to gain access to the occupied territories because of obstruction from Israel. The Israeli policy clearly ran counter to all relevant international instruments.

16. The right to self-determination was vitally important and his delegation strongly supported the Special Committee's conclusion that the ongoing policy of fragmentation of the occupied territories, the continuing construction of the separation wall and increased settlement activities dramatically affected the territorial contiguity and social fabric of the Palestinian people and constituted a gross violation of international law.

17. The Golan was an integral part of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran condemned all measures taken to undermine that country's territorial integrity and was deeply concerned over the deterioration in the human rights situation and the increase in illegal settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan.

18. All Palestinians, including Muslims, Christians and Jews, and especially the refugees who had experienced the ordeals of exile for many years, should freely decide their own future in a referendum. A durable peace would only be possible through the full restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of an independent State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

19. Addressing the comments made by the Israeli representative, he said that a regime that relied on aggression, assassination, State terrorism, kidnapping, torture and all kinds of abhorrent policies should not portray itself as an advocate of democracy and a warrior for human rights. Instead of employing those familiar smokescreen tactics, he would do well to listen to the debate about the gross violations of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and others in the occupied territories. Doing so would enable him to recognize the cause of the tension and conflict in the region. The representative of an entity that systematically violated so many principles of international law and human rights, and which was the primary source of threat, terror and intimidation in the Middle East and around the world, was in no position to level baseless allegations against other countries. He called on the international community to acknowledge the detrimental effects of Israeli policies and activities and to take decisive measures to prevent further violations of human rights and humanitarian law by the Israeli regime in the occupied territories.

20. **Ms. Vivas** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that her delegation welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 64/10 regarding follow-up to the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict. The support of a majority of Member States for that resolution reflected their conviction that impunity for the Israeli Government must stop, since such impunity was the main obstacle to a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

21. Her delegation firmly supported the work of the Special Committee, welcomed its excellent and detailed report and joined other delegations in calling for an immediate end to the Israeli presence in the

occupied territories as a prerequisite for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

22. The human tragedy caused by the Arab-Israeli political conflict had been exacerbated in the period following the establishment of the Special Committee. The present situation in the Gaza Strip had reached the level of a humanitarian catastrophe, as a direct consequence of the recent armed aggression by the Israeli Defense Forces and the severe restrictions imposed on the movement of people and goods. Eighty-five per cent of the population in Gaza was dependent on food aid; while restrictions on the entry of medical supplies, combined with the damage to health-care centres and hospitals caused by the Israeli offensive, had given rise to a health crisis.

23. Her delegation was deeply concerned at the lack of significant progress made towards the realization of the inalienable, permanent and unqualified right of the Palestine people to self-determination, including their right to live in freedom, justice and dignity and to establish their sovereign, independent, democratic and viable contiguous State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 10/20. On the contrary, the Israeli Government had continued its systematic policy of aggression against the Palestinian people, including the destruction of infrastructure and homes in the Gaza Strip and the construction of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, showing clear disregard for the advisory opinion dated 9 July 2004 of the International Court of Justice and the Fourth Geneva Convention. The freedom of movement of the Palestinian people was also increasingly hindered by numerous road blocks, closures and checkpoints. Such policies and practices were contrary to the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination; they also contravened international law and were detrimental to the peace process. It was therefore time to demand respect for the human rights of the Palestinian people, which had been sacrificed for more than 60 years on the pretext of safeguarding Israel's security.

24. Her delegation, which had called on the Security Council to investigate Israel's failure to comply with Council resolutions on peace and security in the Middle East, also endorsed the recommendations of the Special Committee, particularly its request that the General Assembly should urge Member States to intensify their efforts to enforce Israel's compliance with relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly Security Council resolutions, and international humanitarian and human rights law, and its call for Israel to end its occupation of the Syrian Golan, pursuant to Security Council resolution 497 (1981). Lastly, she paid tribute to the resolute spirit of the Palestinian people, who were an example and an inspiration to all peoples struggling for a just peace and the right to self-determination.

25. **Ms. Khan** (Bangladesh) expressed grave concern over the serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law committed by Israel during its military operations in Gaza and endorsed the findings and recommendations of the report of the Special Committee. Israel had used excessive force and had not even spared the compound of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Gaza and continued to impose restrictions on the movement of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory during the Gaza war. The humanitarian situation had been exacerbated by more blockades, continued construction of the separation wall on Palestinian land and expansion of Israeli settlements, and a wide range of Israeli Government policies had changed the demographic make-up of the occupied territories.

26. Israeli forces had systematically violated human rights and legal norms. Bangladesh strongly condemned the harassment and humiliation of Palestinians, especially women and girls, at checkpoints and even in their own homes during security searches. As the occupying Power, Israel must comply with its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention, applicable international law and international humanitarian law.

27. She reiterated her delegation's unwavering support for the cause of the Palestinian people and their legitimate and inalienable right to a sovereign and independent homeland. Noting that the peaceful solution to the conflict lay in the road map drawn up by the Quartet, she urged the parties concerned to implement the recommendations made in the report.

28. Israel must lift its embargo on Palestine and open all border crossings to allow the free movement of goods, people and humanitarian aid. Indeed, freedom of movement must be extended throughout the occupied territories. Furthermore, it must put an end to the collective punishment of civilians in Gaza, stop the

construction of the separation wall and comply fully with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and with General Assembly resolution ES-10/15. Lastly, Israel must withdraw fully and unconditionally from the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem and all other occupied Arab lands.

29. **Mr. Khair** (Jordan) said that his delegation supported the recommendations contained in the report of the Special Committee, which should continue its work until Israel ended its occupation of Arab territory. He called upon Israel to cooperate with the Special Committee and to comply with its recommendations.

30. The report highlighted the considerable number of violations of inalienable Palestinian rights by Israel and made it clear that the situation in the Gaza Strip was a humanitarian disaster, especially as a result of the continuing Israeli-imposed blockade. Various United Nations experts and human rights rapporteurs had called for the blockade to be lifted in order to allow unrestricted imports of medical supplies, foodstuffs, agricultural inputs, fuel and construction materials, grant prompt permission for patients with medical referrals for treatment outside Gaza and ensure the unhindered movement of civilians. He endorsed that call and hoped that reconstruction work in the Gaza Strip would soon be undertaken in order to ease the suffering of the population. He also called upon the international community to ensure that human rights work continued with regard to the Palestinian people, including the people of Gaza.

31. Israel's abusive practices against the Palestinians and the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories were incompatible with a desire for peace, or with Israel's obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law. Israel must cease those practices forthwith. If any progress were to be made, the Palestinian economy must be revived, which would require the discontinuation of unjustified closures and the removal of checkpoints.

32. The continuing expansion of settlements in the West Bank and Israel's plan to build thousands of housing units in East Jerusalem over the forthcoming 10 years violated international law. Indeed, Israeli measures resulting from settlement building, including the expulsion of Palestinians and the destruction of their homes in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, were a clear violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Settlements seriously impeded Palestinians' movement and development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and prevented them from exercising their right to their land and water resources.

33. He called for an immediate and complete halt to settlement activity, including so-called "natural growth" in existing settlements, noting that settlements undermined prospects for an independent and viable Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and were a threat to peace in the region as a whole.

34. Israel continued to shirk its legal and moral responsibilities as the occupying Power by continuing to build the separation barrier, which was destroying the social fabric of Palestinian society, making thousands of Palestinian civilians homeless and increasing their economic hardship. Furthermore, the barrier threatened the establishment of a viable Palestinian state and undermined peace efforts.

35. In occupied East Jerusalem, the scale and pace of unilateral Israeli violations, including excavations around and under Muslim and Christian holy sites, house demolitions, the expulsion of Arab inhabitants, and attempts to change the demographic character of East Jerusalem and impede the work of the Waqf Administration were increasing. Those actions impeded efforts to achieve a two-State solution and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The international community must shoulder its responsibilities and adopt a firm position in order to prevent such actions.

36. His delegation believed that it was totally unacceptable for any action to be taken in Jerusalem that would adversely affect the city. Safeguarding Jerusalem would remain a priority for Jordan, which would spare no effort to protect it and its Muslim and Christian sites. Given the significance of Jerusalem to millions of Muslims and Christians throughout the world, Israel's illegal actions threatened global peace and security.

37. The key to resolving other conflicts, and therefore to ensuring the region's security and stability, was to find an equitable and comprehensive two-State solution to the Palestinian question.

38. **Mr. Ramadan** (Lebanon) said the Israeli army believed that Palestinians did not have the right to life; that much could be read in its graffiti. That was why Israeli soldiers used them as human shields in Gaza,

evicted them from their homes in East Jerusalem or demolished those homes. Indeed, Israeli soldiers targeted and killed Palestinian civilians with impunity and destroyed food factories, hospitals and sewage systems. They detained Arabs for unlimited periods, including young children.

39. His delegation called for a just and comprehensive resolution of the Middle East conflict and an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and for the establishment of a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine. It welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 64/10 and called for immediate action on the findings of the United Nations Fact Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict.

40. Lebanon condemned the blockade of Gaza, demanded that Israel should end it and open the crossing points and condemned Israel's disruption of humanitarian access to the West Bank and demanded an end to colonization activity, including settlements, the separation wall and demolitions of homes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Indeed, colonization activity undermined the unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and jeopardized the two-State solution.

41. Lebanon called on Israel to abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, and called for the expeditious operation of the United Nations Register of Damage caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Furthermore, Israel should stop targeting Islamic sites, particularly the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, which was protected under international law, and end the practice of detaining and imprisoning thousands of Palestinians. Israel should comply with Security Council resolution 497 (1981) relating to the occupied Syrian Golan.

42. He condemned the brutal Israeli practices in occupation prisons and expressed concern over the inhuman conditions of the Syrian detainees in the occupied Syrian Golan, calling upon Israel to reopen the Quneitra entry point, so that Syrian citizens under Israeli occupation could visit their motherland.

43. **Ms. Msechu** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that her delegation supported a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of international law, Security Council resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative. It also supported the two-State solution.

44. She expressed concern over the continuing unlawful activities of Israel, the occupying Power, including the expansion of settlements, house demolitions and forced evictions from the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem and urged Israel to stop those activities in order to allow both sides to resume the stalled peace negotiations. Indeed, her delegation supported the current efforts by the United States of America to bring both sides back to the negotiating table.

45. The expanding settlements and the construction of the wall were major obstacles to the peace process. Her delegation deplored the excessive and indiscriminate use of force against the civilian population and urged the Israeli Government to lift its embargo on the Palestinians, opening the border crossings to allow the free movement of people and goods and the entry of humanitarian aid. It equally supported the right of Israeli civilians to live in peace and the steps it called for would pave the way for the two sides to live side by side.

46. She called on the international community, particularly the Security Council, to take the necessary action to ensure the resumption of the peace process in accordance with its obligations and commitments under the Quartet road map. Lastly, she reiterated her delegation's support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle for their fundamental rights, including the right to an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital. The exercise of that right was in the long-term interest of both Israel and Palestine.

47. **Mr. Jomaa** (Tunisia) said that his delegation was extremely concerned over the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan depicted in the report of the Special Committee. The ongoing Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people, including the blockade, had resulted in grave loss of life and damage to property and infrastructure.

48. Israel's violations of, and restrictions on, the fundamental rights of the Palestinians and the Syrian residents of the occupied Syrian Golan, including their rights to life, health, work, education and freedom of movement, also violated international principles and

resolutions. Urgent action was required to end those practices and the suffering of the Palestinian people.

49. Furthermore, the multitude of illegal Israeli practices, including the ongoing settlement activity and construction of the separation barrier coupled with confiscations of property, had adverse repercussions on the living conditions of Palestinians.

50. He called upon the international community and other actors to compel Israel to honour its obligations, especially those pertaining to the road map and the relevant United Nations resolutions, and to heed the repeated demands of the Quartet, in particular those which called for an immediate halt to the construction of settlements. Settlement expansion posed a grave danger, not only to Palestinian rights, but also to any hope of a resumption of the peace process as a whole.

51. The question of Palestine remained a top priority for Tunisia, which continued to support the just cause of the suffering Palestinian people. He urged the international community and other actors to intervene immediately in order to put an end to Israeli acts of aggression and settlement activity. In that regard, unhindered humanitarian assistance should be provided to the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip.

52. In resolving conflicts, Tunisia supported the option of peace and dialogue based on international law. The stalled peace process heightened fears that the situation would further deteriorate. If the suffering of the Palestinian people were to end, a radical and long-term solution to the crisis must be found, whereby Palestinians would regain their legitimate rights, an independent Palestinian state would be established on Palestinian soil, and occupied Arab territory would be recovered. Such a solution would strengthen peace and increase stability for all peoples of the region.

53. **Mr. Lukwiya** (Uganda) expressed his country's full support for the work of the Special Committee. The Committee's report described the grim humanitarian situation in the occupied territories, an appalling human tragedy whose emotional toll in Gaza and the West Bank Uganda deplored. He called on Israel to take immediate steps to facilitate the movement of Palestinian people and goods and access by international humanitarian organizations to the occupied territories. He called for an end to the blockade and for a freeze on all settlement activity, including natural growth; land confiscations must be halted. Those actions undermined the spirit and credibility of the peace process.

54. His delegation commended UNRWA for the crucial role it continued to play in alleviating Palestinian suffering and called on the international community not only to honour its commitments to Palestine but also to increase its economic and social development assistance.

55. He reiterated Uganda's support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people. Uganda also fully supported the resumption of direct negotiations between Palestine and Israel and the establishment, through peaceful negotiations, of a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine, existing side by side with the State of Israel. It called for the international community, including the Quartet, to once more step up its efforts to support negotiations between the two sides, and for the full implementation of the road map.

56. The conflict in the Middle East had gone on for far too long and a just and durable solution was more urgent than ever before. His delegation was committed to supporting the efforts of all parties to achieve a comprehensive and sustainable peace as envisaged in Security Council resolution 1850 (2008).

57. **Mr. Kim** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that although a number of measures had been taken at the international level to resolve the Middle East question, they had not been translated into action because of the improper attempts of such countries as the United States of America, which tolerated and even encouraged Israel's occupation of Arab territories and the violations of human rights committed therein.

58. Israel continued its brutal military campaigns and the construction of the separation wall, while the blockade of the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the Gaza Strip remained in place. Palestinians were killed daily as a result or driven into exile as refugees. Those actions and policies constituted State terrorism and crimes against humanity; they clearly violated the Charter of the United Nations and international law and constituted a flagrant attempt to undermine the Middle East peace process.

59. The Non-Aligned Movement, as emphasized at its Fifteenth Summit Conference of Heads of State and Government, was committed to fully contributing to

the immediate and just settlement of the Palestinian issue. The first step towards that goal was putting an end to the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories, including Palestine. To that end, it was necessary to take, without delay, just and comprehensive measures aimed at realizing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Furthermore, the core issues, including borders, security, settlements, Jerusalem, refugees, water and prisoners must be resolved.

60. He commended UNRWA for its 60 years of humanitarian assistance and reiterated his delegation's full support for and solidarity with the Palestinian people.

61. **Mr. Ali** (Sudan) said that the Special Committee's report highlighted continuing illegal and inhuman practices by Israel, which violated the rights of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and of Arabs in the occupied Syrian Golan. The report's findings were consistent with those of previous reports, including the most recent report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 (A/64/328), the report of the United Nations Headquarters Board of Inquiry and the combined report on the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories.

62. The report dealt with the effects of the war launched by Israel against the occupied Gaza Strip. That war had killed, injured and handicapped thousands, including women and children and had caused widespread destruction. United Nations premises had also been attacked. Continuing illegal actions in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including settlement building, the destruction of Palestinians' homes and expropriation of their land, aimed to alter the demographic balance, prevent the establishment of an independent Palestine state and pre-empt the final-status negotiations.

63. Palestinians continued to suffer from the construction of the separation wall in the West Bank, which was ongoing despite a ruling of the International Court of Justice, and were subject to arrest and to attacks by Israeli settlers. As of 2009, there were 688 roadblocks and checkpoints restricting movement. Palestinians suffered violations of their rights to life, food, clothing and housing as well as to employment, health, access to education and water.

64. The report highlighted the increasing number of settlers in the occupied Syrian Golan, the construction of new infrastructure and factories and the exploitation of the land, water and other natural resources. Syrian Arab residents were subject to detention, denied employment opportunities, separated from their families and were exposed to landmines and to the deleterious effects of buried nuclear waste. Israel continued to deny United Nations bodies access to the occupied Syrian Golan.

65. His delegation supported the conclusions and recommendations of the Special Committee's report. It also supported an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital and called for the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories.

66. **Mr. Alzayani** (Bahrain) said that the annexation and settlement policies of the occupying Power and the ongoing construction of the separation wall in the West Bank and the occupied Syrian Golan had resulted in a serious deterioration in the situation in the territories occupied since 1967. Those policies violated such international agreements as the Hague Convention and the Fourth Geneva Convention. Aggression and the destruction of public and private property by the occupier had continued and the rights provided for in international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirmed the right to life, liberty and security of person, were being violated.

67. In Jerusalem, the aim of the policy of the occupying Power was to empty that city of its Palestinian inhabitants and Judaize it. Actions taken included excavations, house demolitions and expulsions of Palestinians, in violation of United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 478 (1980) and Human Rights Council resolution S-12/1.

68. The Special Rapporteur for Human Rights noted that house demolitions unrelated to any security concerns had been a major device in extending Israeli control over the West Bank in a manner that impaired Palestinian rights. Palestinians were losing control over their land and their national identity. The presence of settlers, in addition to restrictions and closures, was breaking the Palestinian land up into isolated pockets.

and had resulted in higher unemployment and increased poverty.

69. The Israeli closure system was the primary cause of poverty and the humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Palestinians were displaced as a result of property destruction, land confiscation and the revocation of residency permits as well as occasional deportation. Furthermore, levels of deep poverty among refugees had increased.

70. The construction of the separation wall in the West Bank and around Jerusalem had increased Palestinian suffering and settler violence. The International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion on the legal consequences of the separation wall, had ruled that the wall was illegal. It had also concluded that Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory violated international law.

71. Palestinians in the Gaza Strip had suffered greatly since Israel had first imposed a blockade in September 2007, closing all crossing points and declaring the territory an enemy entity. That blockade constituted collective punishment and was prohibited under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Palestinian suffering had been compounded by Israeli aggression against the Gaza Strip. The Special Committee had concluded that the situation in the Gaza Strip had reached the level of a humanitarian catastrophe, while the report of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission referred to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Many human rights experts had described actions taken by the Israeli Government in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as being systematically discriminatory and, in general, as denying the right of the Palestinian population to live in safety and with dignity.

72. In the occupied Syrian Golan, Israel had continued its annexationist and colonialist policies — building settlements, linking the economy of Syrian villages to Israel, confiscating land and water and expelling the Syrian inhabitants from their land — and had refused to comply with United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 497 (1981). There were also systematic misinformation campaigns which aimed to efface the Arab character of the Golan.

73. The Palestinian people's right to self-determination had been affirmed by the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Peace was a strategic choice. A just and comprehensive peace required full implementation of United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), compliance with previous agreements and adherence to the approach of the 1991 Madrid Conference, the principle of land for peace, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative.

74. As long as the Israeli occupation continued, the Palestinian people and Syrians in the occupied Syrian Golan would suffer. Human rights and basic freedoms would likewise continue to be curtailed until the occupation ended and the Palestinian people exercised its inalienable rights, including the right to establish an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

75. **Mr. Gebreel** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that Palestinians had been suffering under the Israeli occupation since 1948; such occupation was also the main cause of instability in the Middle East. Illegal and inhumane Israeli practices and violations continued as a result of the occupation, as happened with all occupations. Expressing support for the statements of all previous speakers, he said that it would take hours to list all the violations committed by Israel. He wondered whether there was any treaty or international law that Israel had not yet violated in the occupied territories. All Member States must send a message to Israel that its practices, which had been condemned by many reports, were unacceptable. Indeed, an effort must be made to halt them.

76. Ten months after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), there had been no change. Some even denied that the Palestinians were suffering as a result of the occupation and the blockade. It was necessary to support the Palestinian people who were fighting against occupation in order to enable them to exercise their inalienable rights.

77. **Mr. Taleb** (Syrian Arab Republic), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the allegations of the representative of the occupation authorities regarding Israel's respect for human rights were nonsense and ran counter to United Nations reports, the latest of which, the Goldstone report, had recorded war crimes and crimes against humanity by the occupying forces. If Israel really respected human rights it would allow the Special Committee access to the occupied territories. Furthermore, its claims that it respected human rights were contradicted by racist statements in Israel; two Israeli rabbis had said the previous day that it was permissible to kill Arab children and babies.

78. The will of the international community, which almost unanimously supported the Special Committee, its annual reports and the extension of its mandate, was ignored by Israel, despite the fact that Israel owed its existence to a controversial resolution of the General Assembly.

79. Israel did not know how to read history: though it said it had suffered rocket attacks since 2001, the Palestinians had been suffering since 1967. All events since then had been a legal and legitimate reaction to the illegal occupation. Indeed, Hamas had been founded only in 1987, 20 years after the occupation had begun.

80. It was strange that the representative of Israel had not said one word about the settlement construction campaigns, that gobbled up Palestinian land, especially the land of East Jerusalem.

81. **Mr. Hijazi** (Observer for Palestine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Israel held the record for violations by a nation of another people's human rights, international law and United Nations resolutions. Despite its claims of democracy, for 60 years it had denied more than 2.5 million refugees the right of return and refused to recognize their existence. It failed to recognize Palestinian villages, even ones inhabited by its own citizens. Human rights organizations had shown that the State had turned impunity into an institution, its soldiers and armed settlers literally getting away with the murder of Palestinians. He wondered how Israel, a "Jewish State", could be called a democracy when its laws and institutions had set in stone its discrimination against 20 per cent of the population. The country's Arab people were denied recourse to the international institutions established by the civilized world for the resolution of differences and the remedy of violations of international law, allowing Israel to carry out its abuses with impunity. Those abuses were documented by its closest allies, including the United States of America. Israel disdained international law and the international system as a whole. Though unacceptable, it was not surprising that Israel questioned the integrity of United Nations committees because it had never accepted a report by the United Nations or other independent organizations. It said that reports did not advance the goal of peace but its practices on the ground destroyed every hope for peace; an end to the practices would be better than an end to the reports.

82. Withdrawal did not amount to an end to occupation, no matter how many times Israel repeated it. In that regard, instead of fulfilling its obligation as the occupying Power, it had imposed a siege on the entire population of the Gaza Strip. Once more Israel had referred to its security needs to justify war crimes and gross violations of international law. However, the targets of Israeli actions, such as power plants, hospitals, water wells and other infrastructure, did not constitute threats to its security.

83. Palestine would continue to knock on the doors of the United Nations and all its bodies until the occupying Power ended its illegal and brutal practices and the occupation and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were fulfilled, including the right to live free from fear, terror and oppression in an independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

United Nations A/C.4/64/SR.25

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Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 25th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 19 November 2009, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Al-Nasser ..... (Qatar)

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Agenda item 118: Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Completion of the Committee's work

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 30: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/C.4/64/L.2/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.2/Rev.1: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

1. **Mr. González** (Colombia), informing the Committee of the results of the informal consultations on the draft resolution, said that, with the approval of the Working Group of the Whole of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, it had been agreed that paragraph 26 should be revised by replacing the word "encourages" before the words "interregional dialogue" by the words "promotes the"; and that paragraph 28 should be revised by putting in quotation marks the words, "set up national space entities to lay the foundation for a regional entity for cooperation;".

2. **The Chairperson** indicated that the revised draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

3. *Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.2/Rev.1, as orally revised, was adopted.*

Agenda item 31: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (*continued*) (A/64/519; A/C.4/64/L.11-L.14)

4. **Mr. Ramadan** (Lebanon) said that he wished to take issue with a term used in the report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (A/64/519), just circulated. In the penultimate sentence of paragraph 12, the expression "the very tight economic and movement restrictions imposed on the Gaza Strip" did not properly describe what in reality was nothing less than a blockade, as the Secretary-General himself and the Commissioner-General of UNRWA had in fact termed it.

5. **Mr. Kleib** (Indonesia) introduced the four draft resolutions under agenda item 31 (A/C.4/64/L.11-L.14), which addressed the core issues relating to the Palestine refugees and the essential services that UNRWA was providing to them despite serious impediments.

6. The texts were based on those adopted in previous sessions. In draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.11 on assistance to Palestine refugees, he highlighted paragraphs 3 and 4 emphasizing the crucial nature of the work of UNRWA and the urgency of meeting its financial needs. In draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.12 on persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities, he emphasized the provisions regarding their right of return and their continuing need for humanitarian assistance. Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.13 on the operations of UNRWA gave a comprehensive picture of the work the Agency was doing under extreme and dangerous conditions; he drew particular attention to the preambular paragraphs detailing the harsh life of the refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the destruction and obstruction caused by the Israeli occupying forces, highlighting also paragraphs 1, 2, 16 to 18, 22 and 23. Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.14 on Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues reaffirmed their just claims, which had to be part of the final status negotiations in the Middle East peace process.

7. The sponsors hoped that the international community's firm commitment to support UNRWA and the Palestine refugees until a just and lasting solution was achieved would be reflected in the broadest possible support of the draft resolutions by the members of the Committee.

8. **Mr. Zhang** (Secretary of the Committee) said that draft resolutions A/C.4/64/L.11, L.12 and L.14 had no programme budget implications. However, under rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the Secretariat had to specify the financial arrangements entailed by draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.13 on UNRWA operations, which made three requests of the Secretary-General. He noted with reference to paragraph 5, that, while the regular budget made no separate provisions for the meetings of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, the Group had traditionally received support for processing and publishing its reports from the Secretary-General and the Commissioner-General and their staff. Furthermore, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 3331 B (XXIX), the salaries of UNRWA international staff had since 1975 been financed from the regular budget and were dealt with in a separate section of the programme budget, which contained a reference to the other UNRWA costs that continued to be met from extrabudgetary resources. The responsibilities of the Secretary-General vis-à-vis the financing of UNRWA from the regular budget of the United Nations had been defined in successive proposed programme budgets in

accordance with the General Assembly resolution in question.

9. As to the request for a report from the Secretary-General in paragraph 8 of the draft resolution, he recalled that the Commissioner-General of UNRWA was authorized under General Assembly resolution 302 (IV) to report directly and independently to the General Assembly and consequently could commission any report on the management of UNRWA, in consultation with the Secretary-General if appropriate.

10. With regard to the request in paragraph 7 of the draft resolution for support from the regular budget for the institutional strengthening of the Agency, he drew attention to General Assembly resolution 45/248 B, which reaffirmed that administrative and budgetary matters should be dealt with by the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

11. Accordingly, there were currently no programme budget implications arising from draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.13.

12. **The Chairperson** invited the Committee to take action on the four draft resolutions under item 31.

Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.11: Assistance to Palestine refugees

13. **Mr. Zhang** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland had joined the sponsors.

14. A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America.

15. *Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.11 was adopted by 169 votes to 1, with 7 abstentions.*

Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.12: Persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities

16. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, Panama, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Canada, Fiji.

17. *Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.12 was adopted by 167 votes to 7, with 3 abstentions.*

Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.13: Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

18. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore,

Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Canada, Fiji.

19. *Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.13 was adopted by 167 votes to 6, with 3 abstentions.*

Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.14: Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues

20. **Mr. Zhang** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland had become sponsors.

21. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Fiji.

22. *Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.14 was adopted by 169 votes to 6, with 2 abstentions.*

23. **The Chairperson** invited delegations wishing to do so to explain their votes after the vote.

24. **Mr. Weissbrod** (Israel), reiterating Israel's support for the humanitarian work of UNRWA, said that his Government would continue to do its utmost to facilitate the Agency's operations while maintaining its own essential security. Regrettably, the welcome

comments of the Commissioner-General highlighting the ongoing, close cooperation between UNRWA and the Israeli officials in the field, together with many other such elements, had not been reflected in the resolutions before the Committee. That alone showed that they were not really about reinforcing the humanitarian work of UNRWA, but about censuring Israel.

25. The draft resolutions were one-sided: they ignored the security challenges that Israel was facing from Gaza and the fundamental problem that existed when a terrorist organization operated from within civilian areas and in proximity to United Nations installations; they failed to mention Hamas by name or refer to its cruel methods of fighting Israel by putting the lives of both Israelis and Palestinians at risk. Among the many other omissions, they failed to mention that UNRWA was encountering difficulties and obstructions caused by that terrorist organization in Gaza. For those and other reasons, Israel had voted against all four draft resolutions.

26. **Mr. Windsor** (Australia) said that his delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.13 because Australia strongly supported the work of UNRWA and its often courageous staff, particularly during the current crisis. It was also deeply saddened by the conflict in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel early in the year, which had been a further reminder to all States that a lasting resolution to the dispute between Palestinians and Israelis could only be brought about through peaceful means and must be pursued as a matter of urgency. The current situation of conflict, insecurity and uncertainty was unacceptable and not in the interests of Israel, the Palestinians, the Middle East region or the broader international community.

27. The text itself, however, lacked balance. It failed to condemn all the Hamas actions, including rocket attacks, that deliberately endangered civilian lives. He wished to make it clear that Australia strongly supported Israel's right to self-defence. His delegation also had concerns about the flawed nature of the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict and did not endorse the reference to it in the draft resolution. In addition, it would have liked to see some mention of the cooperation between Israel and UNRWA on the ground in Gaza.

28. **Mr. Bowman** (Canada) said that his delegation had abstained in the vote on draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.13 because it was profoundly concerned about the significant and not entirely warranted changes made to the text since the previous year. Some of the new language did not promote a peaceful solution to the crisis, sought to blame Israel alone and failed to recognize that it had been Hamas's rockets fired against Israeli civilians that had caused the conflict in Gaza. The General Assembly was not a tribunal and could not determine legal liability for allegedly wrongful international acts. Such unhelpful language had no place in a resolution supporting the good work done by UNRWA.

29. **Ms. Mawe** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that their delegations had voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.13 because they remained gravely concerned about the humanitarian situation in Gaza. The European Union had consistently called for the immediate and unconditional opening of crossings to and from Gaza, without which the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid, reconstruction and recovery would not be possible. While acknowledging that some crossings had been opened, they were insufficient to meet population needs.

Agenda item 32: Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (*continued*) (A/64/516 and 517; A/C.4/64/L.15-L.19)

30. **Ms. Hernández Toledano** (Cuba) introducing the five draft resolutions under agenda item 32 (A/C.4/64/L.15-L.19), said that they were all aimed at convincing Member States to assume their responsibilities by bringing to an end Israel's long, brutal and illegal regime in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, where the situation had deteriorated tragically in the past year.

31. After reviewing the preambular paragraphs of draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.15 on the work of the Special Committee, she drew attention to paragraphs 1, 5 and 8 (a). In draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.16 on the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the other occupied Arab territories, she highlighted paragraphs 1 to 4. In draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.17 on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East

Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan, she drew attention to the second to fourth and thirteenth and fourteenth preambular paragraphs, and to paragraphs 1, 3, 4 and 6 reaffirming the long-standing position of the United Nations that the Israeli settlements in Arab lands were illegal, a cause of violence and an obstacle to peace and development. In draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.18 on Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, she reviewed the applicable international legal provisions cited in the preamble, highlighted the seventeenth, nineteenth and twenty-first preambular paragraphs detailing Israel's ongoing, systematic violations and the deteriorating situation in the Gaza Strip in the aftermath of its recent military operation there, and made particular reference to paragraphs 1, 2, and 6 to 10. Noting that the text of the draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.19, on the occupied Syrian Golan, was the same as that of the previous year, she underscored its strong message against foreign occupation and annexation and recalled that Israel's decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration had been declared null and void from the start by the Security Council.

32. In view of the critical human rights situation created by the ongoing illegal Israeli practices and violations, the sponsors hoped that those important draft resolutions would receive broad support.

33. **Mr. Zhang** (Secretary of the Committee) said that none of the five draft resolutions under item 32 had programme budget implications.

34. **The Chairperson** invited Committee members to take action on the five draft resolutions.

Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.15: Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

35. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Chile, China, Comoros, Congo, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, Panama, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay.

36. *Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.15 was adopted by 92 votes to 9, with 72 abstentions.*

Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.16: Applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other occupied Arab territories

37. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji.

38. *Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.16 was adopted by 166 votes to 6, with 3 abstentions.*

Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.17: Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan

39. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the

Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, Panama, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire.

40. *Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.17 was adopted by 166 votes to 7, with 2 abstentions.*

Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.18: Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

41. **Mr. Zhang** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Mauritania had become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

42. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, Panama, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Liberia, Republic of Korea.

43. *Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.18 was adopted by 160 votes to 9, with 5 abstentions.*

Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.19: The occupied Syrian Golan

44. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso,

Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, Panama, Tonga, United States of America.

45. *Draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.19 was adopted by 165 votes to 1, with 10 abstentions.*

46. **The Chairperson** invited members to explain their votes.

47. **Mr. Løvold** (Norway) said that the establishment of peaceful relations between Israel and Pakistan was contingent on a negotiated peace settlement and a viable two-State solution. His delegation had voted in favour of the draft resolution because it placed on both parties the responsibility to undertake independent investigations into possible violations of international humanitarian and human rights law relating to the Gaza conflict and so build an atmosphere of trust conducive to sustaining serious peace negotiations and the implementation of any future peace agreement.

48. **Mr. Taleb** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation had voted in favour of draft resolutions A/C.4/64/L.15 and L.18 because his country believed in the justice of the struggle for liberation of the Palestinian people. However, he wished it to be recorded that his delegation rejected the suggestion implicit in the eighth preambular paragraph of the first of those drafts, and in the nineteenth preambular paragraph of the second, that there was parity between the aggressor and the victim. It should be recalled that it was Israel that was occupying Palestinian territory and Israel that had used internationally outlawed weapons to kill Palestinian children, women, the aged and other innocent persons in Gaza during the military aggression that it had carried out between December 2008 and January 2009. People living under occupation had the right to resist that occupation, and the Syrian Arab Republic and the many others that shared that belief would not accept that the truth should be made to appear a lie or that injustice and murder should triumph over justice and the law. His delegation therefore wished to go on record as refusing to accept the removal from the relevant paragraphs of the description of the military operations in the Gaza Strip as Israeli operations, and it would continue to reject any equation between the occupier and those resisting foreign occupation. Such an equation was essentially erroneous and contrary to the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. It also constituted a betrayal of the human rights which had been established by the United Nations.

49. **Mr. Hosseini** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation had supported all the draft resolutions in the interest of consensus and in solidarity with and sympathy for the Palestinian people. However, it wished to reaffirm its long-held position on resolutions pertaining to Palestine. While his Government unwaveringly supported the aspirations of the

Palestinian people, it felt that some parts of the draft resolution could be construed as interference in the latter's domestic affairs; any internal difficulties should be addressed by the Palestinians themselves. The support of the international community for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people was critical, since there could be no solution unless those rights were fully recognized, restored and maintained. A durable peace must include an end to discrimination and occupation, the return of refugees and the establishment of a democratic Palestine with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital.

50. **Ms. Mäwe** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the delegations had abstained from the vote on draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.15. While the European Union had noted the use of the term "collective punishment" in draft resolutions A/C.4/64/L.15 and L.18, which was a precise legal term under international humanitarian law, it had not yet expressed itself as a whole on the use of that term in the present context.

51. While recognizing Israel's legitimate right to self-defence, the European Union called on that country to exercise the utmost restraint and to refrain from any action that was disproportionate or breached international humanitarian and human rights law. The European Union condemned violence against Palestinian civilians, as well as the firing of rockets into Israel, and called for a complete and sustained halt to all such acts of violence and terrorism. It fully agreed with the need for serious follow-up of the recommendations of the Goldstone report and would continue to follow closely the parties' investigations into alleged violations of international humanitarian law.

52. **Ms. Graham** (New Zealand) said that her delegation had voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.18 because of its deep concern about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the severe impact of movement restrictions in Gaza and the West Bank. The issues raised in the resolution must be approached with a sense of balance. In that connection, it considered the term "collective punishment" to be unacceptable and unhelpful. Her delegation strongly supported Israel's right to self-defence and condemned Hamas's indiscriminate rocket attacks against Israeli civilians. She urged all parties to resume negotiations towards the solution of a contiguous Palestinian State living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

53. **Mr. Bowman** (Canada) said that his delegation remained concerned about the disproportionate emphasis placed by the Committee on the Middle East situation and the number of draft resolutions singling out one country: Israel. The debate in the General Assembly should be fair-minded and seek to advance efforts to arrive at a two-State solution. His delegation had reiterated its support for draft resolutions touching on key issues and had voted in favour of draft resolutions A/C.4/64/L.16 and L.17 inasmuch as Israel had violated the Fourth Geneva Convention, particularly through settlements in the West Bank. However, some of the language used in those resolutions was unbalanced and continued to be divisive. Canada would continue to encourage the General Assembly to focus on assisting the parties in their efforts towards a peaceful two-State solution and to resist any further polarization of the situation.

54. **Ms. Abdelhady-Nasser** (Observer for Palestine), expressing her gratitude to the sponsors of the draft resolution and those who had voted in their favour, said that they reflected the international community's commitment to respect the principles of international humanitarian and human rights law. They also addressed the plight of the Palestinian people living under foreign occupation and a commitment to ensure respect for their human rights. Compliance with international law should be seen as complementing current peace efforts, not as contrary to them. Those who truly supported the cause of peace should persist in their demands for a complete cessation of human rights violations, which would bring about a real change in the situation on the ground and create a negotiating environment in which the two parties could achieve a final, just and lasting settlement.

55. Regarding objections to use of the term "collective punishment" in two of the draft resolutions, she pointed out that such punishment was prohibited under article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the principle that no protected person could be punished for an offence that he or she had not personally committed. Thus a broad array of Israel's actions against the Palestinian people as a whole were illegal: the military aggression against the Palestinian civilian population; the blockade imposed on 1.5 million people, depriving them of the basic rights to education, health, food and employment; the myriad checkpoints and roadblocks; the fact that the majority of Palestinians were prohibited from entering East

Jerusalem or worshipping at their Christian holy sites; and the confiscation of Palestinian land for construction of the separation wall and the extension of Israeli settlements. Those hostilities and deprivations were all forms of collective punishment, and the very scale of their imposition by the occupying power against Palestinians simply because they were Palestinian made them tantamount to war crimes.

56. The content of the eighth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.15 and the nineteenth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.4/64/L.18, with which the representative of Syria had taken issue, expressly referred to the content of the Goldstone report and the report of the Board of Inquiry and in no way equated the occupier and its crimes with the occupied people and their suffering.

57. **Mr. Ja'afari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation thanked all those who had voted in favour of the draft resolutions relating to items 31 and 32, thereby reaffirming the international community's rejection of the occupation of territory by force and contempt for the rights of peoples. A clear message had been sent to Israel that it should end its occupation of all the territories it currently occupied, cease its violations of the Geneva Conventions, and become a genuine partner in the peace process. The majority vote in favour of the draft resolution on the occupied Syrian Golan indicated that the international community considered that all Israeli practices in that territory were legally invalid and dangerously provocative.

58. The votes in support of the draft resolutions had confirmed the importance of the role played by the Special Committee in laying Israeli crimes before the international community. He therefore asked all States to support the Committee: any attempt to diminish its powers would only encourage Israel to greater violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

59. The Syrian Arab Republic had repeatedly expressed its commitment to peace. Israel had, however, ignored its overtures and continued its practices in the territories it occupied. Those practices included the detention of thousands of Palestinians and their democratically elected representatives, the siege of Gaza and sustained settlement activity. Peace could not be brought about by one party when the other party, namely, Israel, was doing everything in its power to destroy any prospect of peace. Any failure to condemn the occupation would send the message that the law of the jungle was as valid as international law and that those who flouted the law would not be held accountable.

Agenda item 118: Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Draft decision A/C.4/64/L.10: Proposed programme of work and timetable of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) for the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly

60. **The Chairperson** drew attention to the draft decision submitted by the Bureau for inclusion, with the Committee's approval, as an annex to the report on item 118 to the plenary Assembly. That proposed programme of work was, of course, subject to adjustment at the sixty-fifth session. He took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft decision with that understanding.

61. *Draft decision A/C.4/64/L.10 was adopted.*

Completion of the Committee's work

62. **The Chairperson** observed that the work of the Fourth Committee was primarily political and, as decided by its members, would remain so. At the same time, the Committee dealt with a number of issues that related to other aspects of the work of the Secretariat, including public information, outer space and atomic radiation, and the flexible working methods the Committee had adopted in recent years, such as the informative interactive dialogue format, had allowed it to pursue those wide-ranging issues in depth.

63. After reviewing the work accomplished under each agenda item during the session, and recalling that two pending reports under agenda items 29 and 33 still had to be discussed at the current session in 2010, he declared that the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) had completed its work for the main part of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.